



Dr. Catherine Hannan, Plastic Surgeon
Monday, April 6, 2015

She has seen a lot in her three short years as a plastic surgeon at the Washington DC Veterans Affairs Medical Center. For Dr. Catherine Hannan, there is no such thing as a typical day or a typical patient. In one day, she may see a Veteran with skin or breast cancer, a paraplegic with pressure sores, and a women Veteran with severe back pain in need of a breast reduction.

Dr. Hannan, the daughter of an Army Veteran, became a doctor because she wanted a job where she could help people every day to the best of her ability. “The best part of my day is seeing my post-operative patients with a smile on their faces,” she said.

“Their smiles can be from decreased pain, a finally healed wound after months or years of dressing changes, or the feeling of relief knowing that a potentially deadly skin cancer is gone from their bodies and their minds.” Recently one of her patients was so pleased with her surgery results, she took to Facebook to thank and praise Dr. Hannan and Dr. Lauren Patrick. “...They're the best!!!!!!” wrote Veteran Natasha Frye.

Three days a week, Dr. Hannan is in the operating room performing a variety of different procedures. Although VA surgeons don't perform unnecessary “cosmetic” surgeries, they do employ aesthetic principles when reconstructing breasts or closing wounds. “It is very satisfying to restore form and function to the body, as well as the psychological benefits associated with healing,” she said.

Dr. Hannan says some her most satisfying professional experiences have been with patients suffering from hidradenitis suppurativa, a very debilitating, worsening condition of skin infections.

The condition is very unglamorous. the treatments are painful and the healing process is lengthy. “These are surgeries that we as surgeons truly dislike doing, but the outcome is amazing,” she said. “Afterwards,

my patients are so grateful; they have gone back to playing with their grandchildren, going back to work and leisure activities all without pain.”

Restoring form, function and normalcy and improving the quality of Veterans’ lives is all in a day’s work for Dr. Catherine Hannan.